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*CORNFIELD IN TAOS*  
By Walter Ufer

—Now on Exhibition at the Art Institute  
—Courtesy Carson Pirie Scott & Co.

## Exhibitions at Chicago Galleries

By THE EDITOR

**I**NTO the fog and smoke of Chicago the exhibition of the Taos Society of Artists comes with a burst of sunshine and a breath of fresh air, with a message from the eternal hills that out under the blue dome a primitive people still worship God in nature and seek for unity with the Great Spirit through a simple life, close to Nature's laws.

The Carson Pirie Scott Galleries have never staged a more interesting show nor one more characteristically American. Here, at any rate, is an independent colony of painters who are seeking for novelty,

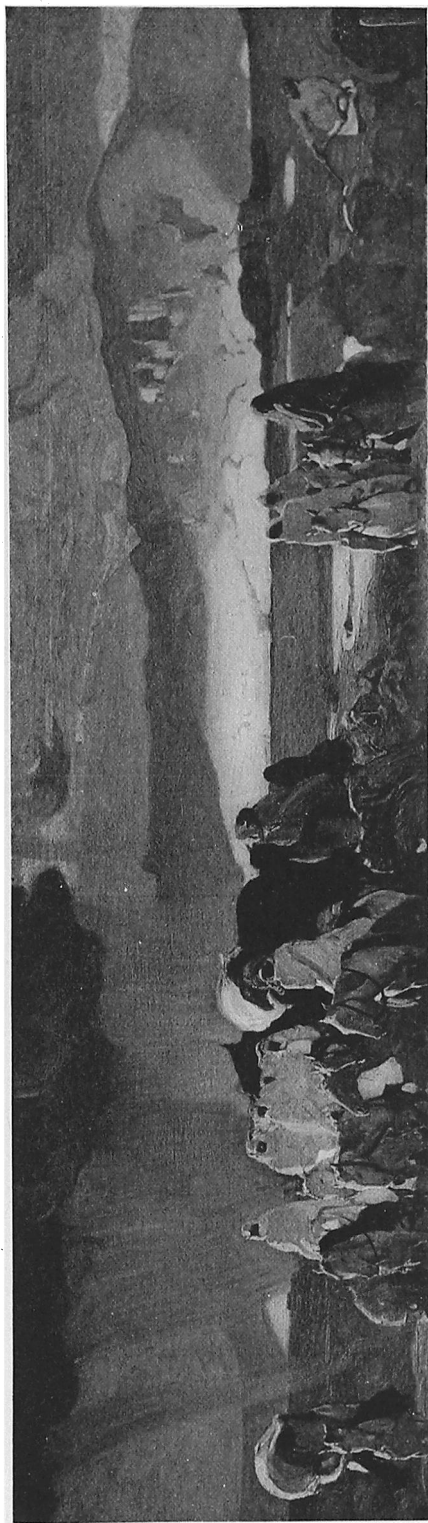
as literary people do, not by upsetting the old established laws of their art but by finding a new field for their application. At first one regarded these paintings as interesting largely from the standpoint of local color. The public thrills to their romance of primitive life, and the picturesqueness of semi-savage costume. Year by year as new men have gone to Taos new angles of interest have been discovered until today something bigger and broader is creeping into the works of the colony and we feel the rise of a new school, the school of sun and nature worship in art.

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Apparently the Indians are teaching our artists anew to drink at the oldest fountain of true artistic inspiration, the well of reverence which springs up in every sensitive soul under the spell of Nature's majesty.

The quaint but ordered life of these old Pueblos, the childlike yet poetic traditions of their nature worship have stolen unawares upon the spirit of the artist, always receptive and responsive, so that, today, we feel in Taos pictures a certain quality of unity between painter and subject as if brought together by a growing spirit of reverence for the same things. Between this exhibition and former Indian painting is as great a distinction as there is between the superficial observation of a traveler upon the life and custom of strange peoples and a good translation of the native literature of those same folk.

One message breathes from the exhibition as a whole and is felt in nearly every picture, a feeling of longing to be out-of-doors and a desire for something other than the complexity of modern life, wherein each man is not an entirety but merely a factor. Not only the Indian but the country has no doubt wrought upon the spirits of the artists who, in turn, play upon our sensibilities with the utmost refinement of skill. All native born Americans have in their natures, a something of the soil and to this Taos pictures make a strong appeal. Love of freedom was not only brought across the seas by brave pilgrims and bold adventurers. It was native here. It is in the air, the water, and the soil and sun, and we share it in common with the Aborigines. Should we, in time, like them, evolve into a species of nature worship tempered by the ideals of Judaism, and is this really back of or beneath all of our fresh air enthusiasms, the development of outdoor sports, sleeping porches and sun parlors? Who can say whether science is the instigator of these innovations or merely the justifications which intellect demands from instinct for following its own course.



—Courtesy Carson Pirie Scott & Co.

THE RAIN CLOUD  
By Ernest L. Blumenschein

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SONG OF THE NIGHT  
By E. Irving Couse

—Courtesy Carson Pirie Scott & Co.

At any rate we have embarked upon a new era and with it comes a new art, fresh and full of sparkle and life. One thing only remains to be done. We must achieve something new in architecture and interior decoration. Modern art could make better headway if the modern home offered a better background for its crisp and brilliant impressions of nature in her true colors. No wonder that the old-fashioned home from which fresh air was excluded, with its artifices of upholstery and drapings, found fiddle brown studio memories of nature, as fancy recalled her, in tone with the surroundings, or that period interiors still suggest the use of these things. Surely,

however, this is not the end and new regions of possibility remain to be explored in the direction of building and furnishing.

Still, from the standpoint of good color and harmonious line, there are many pictures in the Taos exhibition that could be used in a number of the usual well planned interiors. Blumenschein's exquisite, though gorgeous, frieze, "The Rain Cloud," and his decorative study, "Baldhead," begin to take on this cosmopolitan character, so supreme is their artistry that subject becomes secondary. Julius Rolshoven's portrait heads are also most adaptable in the same grounds and Couse has so wrought his idealized braves into a tapestry of poetic fancy that

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they belong to the realms of art alone and so are easily placed with other objects of an aesthetic character.

Blumenschein indeed produces quite a new thrill in "The Rain Cloud." An indescribable spell of beauty is woven by its onyx, chalcedony, turquoise and lapis-lazuli colors set in the gold of sun through storm-torn skies. Against this radiant glow the procession of white robed figures on mountain ponies takes on a classic feeling of stately measured motion. Artists who are familiar with the scene and occasion—the latter being nothing more than an In-

dian rabbit hunt—were amazed at the beauty of the scene, for, though literal, as to landscape, figures and color, this picture contains the very essence of pageantry in all ages. The mounted figures might be crusaders, Knights of King Arthur's Court or any troop from the best days of romance. Altogether it is not a usual feat of painting but a mirage-like fantasy, true in form but reflected in the rarefied upper atmosphere of art.

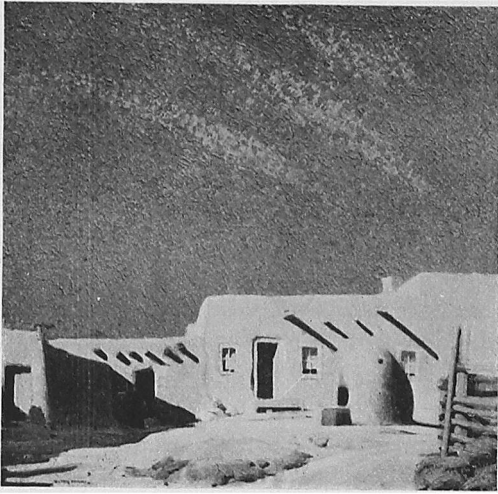
About "Baldhead" there hovers the spectre of tragedy. We feel that he is a lonely old man and much given to reflection and as



A TELLER OF ANCIENT TALES  
By Victor Higgins

—Courtesy Carson Pirie Scott & Co.

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A VIEW IN TAOS

By Victor Higgins

—Courtesy Carson Pirie Scott & Co.

such his story reveals him for he is an out-cast, condemned to live his whole life outside the pueblo as a "mankiller" for having taken the life of an associate while a young man in a drunken brawl. He recalls some Japanese carvings and prints of old men though possessing more of majesty than these.

Rolshoven portraits show the details of Indian costume at their best. In "Summer Deer" we are inspired by the real taste in line and color which prevail throughout the braves' attire and in his portrait heads we see how effective is the Cocheekee, a beautiful scarf of richly toned silk when knotted with careless grace about a bronze forehead and allowed to fall in flowing ends upon the blue-black hair.

Among the Couse pictures is an exquisite moonlight study of two Indians, one playing on a primitive flute. This and his "Katchina Painter," with his crown of fresh green leaves, are classical in suggestion and full of harmony and pervaded by a something like melody.

Victor Higgins progresses steadily toward the poetry of line, color and dreamy atmosphere which give a picture that charming feeling of the unreal which per-

haps, after all, is the best of art. His "Street of Shadows" is full of the suggestion of continuity of time throughout long centuries and his "Chili Vendor" makes us feel that it is a custom not an incident which he presents. The latter is, as an artist put it, wonderfully *the thing*, with its arrangement of prairie schooner against adobe walls, gay with strings of peppers, and its background of quiet hills. His larger portrait of "A Teller of Ancient Tales" presents a man who has his prototype in our own race; the diplomat and politician who has lived, and loved much and, in later years, turned *raconteur*. This old man, in his eighties, loves to relate tales of the buffalo hunt and raids into the Teepee and Navajo countries, raids wherein, among the spoils of war, were pretty women.

W. Herbert Dunton is easily the best romancer of the group, telling us the story of Indian and cowboy life with all the thrill of a Rex Beach or Jack London story. His range riders, Crows and Scouts, are each an episode in a story the rest of which we surmise or construct according to our individual predilections. It is not that he lacks in art but rather that he excels in action and incident, things which, if present in a picture at all, are likely to make first claim upon our attention.



SHADOW STREET

By Victor Higgins

—Courtesy Carson Pirie Scott & Co.



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Bert G. Phillips gives us good character studies in his "Young Hunter" and "Indian Boy of Taos." The Indian boy, with his bow and arrow, recalls the little Hiawatha and brings out the fact that Indian boys are given only the bow and arrow for their first hunting experiences and expected to become expert with that before being allowed to handle more modern weapons.

J. H. Sharpe presents, among his entries, a study of ancient tribal costume that is most refined in color. His "Taos Indian Girl," wearing her Acoma dress which some two hundred years of time have faded from its original indigo to a delicious purplish brown, is as harmonious as a bit of fine old Chinese embroidery. This robe, draped in classic fashion, over one shoulder, is embroidered heavily in wools and is altogether something of a creation. His most important canvas, "Watchful Waiting," shows two braves on a hunt, one of them only in breach-clout and moccasin, the other wearing the white robe which is now universal in Taos. To Mr. Sharpe must be accorded the honor of founding this school, for he was the first and is now the oldest member of the colony.

A man who has achieved much and of whom much more is still to be expected in Walter Ufer who swept all prizes before him a season or so ago on his return from Taos with the first of his Indian pictures. Truth, vivid and unmistakable, rendered with a skill that few attain, is the present great achievement of his art, but subjectivity, the grasp of the spiritual rather than the actual is his ultimate ambition. Ordinarily one would refer to such a picture as "The Solemn Pledge," which won for him the big prize at the Art Institute, as a masterpiece. With a man like Ufer, however, it is only a phase of his art, something which marks a step in progress but not the end thereof. Something of what he has in view is felt in his "Cornfield in Taos," of the present exhibition. It is only a small picture, the least of the three which he

shows, but it is significant, big with that spirit of outdoors and of Nature which thrills and eludes him, as it does all with the gift of art. His other two canvases are distinguished performances along the line of his acknowledged triumphs. They give us the life of Taos as seen by a neighbor who is all but one of the people. From these to abstract painting would be as great a step as could be taken, but should this man, already so amazing a realist, ever turn to subjective art he would bring thereto what the greatest of subjective painters have always possessed to lay upon its altars, an ability to do the reverse to the last limit of human skill.

We illustrate a large canvas prepared for this show but sent first to the Chicago Artists' Exhibition at the Art Institute, where it is now on view. Some connoisseurs declare this to be the greatest of his achievements so far. Truly it begins to show his growing idealism and one senses the rustle of the corn and feels the kiss of air and sun. His characteristic blue is seen in the distant hills and in the wonderful transparent luminous shadow of the figure in the foreground. One thing Ufer can do that seems almost magical, namely, put absolutely clear transparent atmosphere into a picture. Usually the term, atmospheric is applied to fuzzy, foggy, effects but here is a man who can put in the palpable air of a day and a country where it is as clear and bright as crystal.

O. E. Berninghaus must be congratulated on his little picture, "A Trail in the Foothills," which is a splendid exposition of a broad handling of small figures. It is admirably composed and drawn and almost too exquisite in color, with that feeling of little pictures of the old school, brilliant and clear beneath a sky of rare beauty. "His Favorite Pony" is a large canvas so different in treatment as to seem the work of another man. It is remarkable for facial expression in the man and his four-footed friend and for a fine flood of fiery light as from a lowering sun.